

## **A licence to practise**

Identifying the components of a licence to practise  
for qualified teachers in the learning and skills sector

Further Education National Training Organisation:  
A position paper to support the reform agenda for  
initial teacher training for the learning and skills sector

September 2004

## 1 Introduction

1.1 November 2003 was significant for those who have an interest in the training of teachers for the learning and skills sector in England. For the first time in a considerable period, this aspect of workforce development became subject to particular scrutiny with the simultaneous publication of the findings of Ofsted's longitudinal survey of initial teacher training for further education, *The initial training of further education teachers* (Ofsted November 2003), and the DfES consultation document *The future of initial teacher education for the learning and skills sector: An agenda for reform* (DfES November 2003). Both papers, and the subsequent consultation events, triggered considerable discussion about a suitable model of teacher training which could ensure the supply of effective practitioners within this diverse and developing sector. Discussion and debate has continued with the publication of the responses to the consultation, and will, no doubt, persist until and beyond any announcement by DfES of planned future action.

1.2 The DfES consultation document set out a number of changes to the way new entrants to the teaching profession in the learning and skills sector might be prepared for their roles and career paths. In particular the document included **a proposal to introduce an award which would recognise the status of 'qualified teacher' for this sector** in the way that QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) confers recognition for school teachers.

1.3 In response to the consultation, FENTO stated that recognition of the successful completion of initial training and professional development through the award of a licence to practise was essential. We suggested that conferment of the status of qualified teacher was one of the means by which the DfES aspiration that teaching in the learning and skills sector became a career of choice might be fulfilled. The summary of the responses to the consultation confirms that a desire for the status and esteem that such an award can represent is widely shared in the sector.

1.4 However, within the wider reform agenda debate, there has been less discussion of what precisely might be the components of a licence to practise in the learning and skills sector. The training of schoolteachers can signpost some elements which might beneficially be included. However, the differences within the post-compulsory education and training sector, with its predominant in service route to teaching qualifications and much greater diversity of learning environments, indicate that a simple adoption of QTS will not necessarily produce a fit-for-purpose model for this teaching workforce.

1.5 **This paper endeavours to present a model which is fit-for-purpose for teachers in the many and varied learning environments in the sector, and the many and varied paths they may take to become qualified teachers.**

## 2 The licence to practise

In its position paper *Wider sector: wider perspectives – Securing an initial teacher education framework to underpin effective teaching* (FENTO January 2004) FENTO stated its belief that preparing new teachers who are entering the workforce should take longer and involve a greater variety of experiences than is currently the case. We supported **full professional development having two phases – a period leading to an endorsed teaching qualification plus a period of workplace development**. We now wish to explore further what we would advocate as the component parts of these two phases.

In doing this we are mindful that when Lifelong Learning UK is licensed as the sector skills council for the learning and skills sector, it will inherit the responsibility for reviewing the Teaching and Supporting Learning Standards at present applied in England and Wales. It will need to do this in the context of establishing comprehensive UK wide standards. FENTO is therefore conscious that the licence to practise needs to have resonance across all four countries in terms of how the status of qualified teachers in equivalent learning environments is defined, as well as with developments in Europe.

This is not an impossible challenge if the next evolution of the Teaching and Supporting Learning Standards provides an appropriate design model.

This model should:

- recognise the common core of standards accepted as essential for all learning environments in all four countries
- provide supplementary combinations of options that allow trainee teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills explicit to their particular location in the sector

If these criteria are met, then this model could also apply to the licence. With agreement on what constitutes the required components of the licence, a matrix could be formulated which identifies equivalent elements. This could include the different legislative contexts, the organisational arrangements of the separate administrations, and the different sub sectors of the learning and skills sector.

### Suggested Licence to Practise components

We recommend satisfactory coverage of the revised Teaching and Supporting Learning Standards over the two phases should be demonstrated through:

- Satisfactory achievement of an endorsed initial teaching qualification covering the full professional role – to include achievement of specific standards set for trainee/early career teachers
- Successful completion of a skills test – language, literacy and numeracy minimum core personal competencies demonstrated through a national external

test. This could be extended to include Information and Communications Technology (ICT), if this were to be included in the minimum core of key skills competencies for teachers

- Delivery of a minimum number of logged teaching hours (to include a minimum tariff of hours in two ‘areas’<sup>1</sup> in addition to those experienced on teaching practice during the qualification phase)
- Assessment of a minimum number of observations as at least satisfactory during the workplace development phase; at least one observation to be subject specific **and** one to be conducted by an external assessor
- Completion of a workplace development time period and any post ITT qualification action plan objectives relevant to this phase
- Completed Personal Development Log incorporating all necessary evidence for the components of the licence, signed off by an authorised assessor(s)

Patterns of completing the components will vary and, for some teachers, a number may be gained concurrently with the qualification phase. However, as one of the principles of workplace development is to give new entrants a period of **further reflection and development**, there should be a minimum time period of workplace development required **after** completion of the qualification for **all** trainee teachers, even if the additional logged teaching hours are completed sooner.

There will only be two starting points to achieve a licence – at the commencement of employment for those taking the in service route to a teaching qualification; and at the initial assessment stage for the pre service teacher training candidates; that is to say, immediately after enrolling on a suitable course aimed at the achievement of an endorsed teaching qualification.

The arrangements for gaining a licence to practise will need to incorporate a number of key characteristics if the licence is to be a meaningful goal for the teaching workforce in the learning and skills sector. These characteristics are designed to ensure flexibility, and ease of access and assessment. They are essential in order to recognise the diversity of the sector’s learning environments and the variety of teaching commitments of those who may seek the licence (eg full time; fractional; sessional; part time; portfolio workers; employed by non-educational organisations, etc). These characteristics are also intended to support the principle that the licence should be achievable by the many, not the few. They are also to acknowledge that the licence may be a progression from other job roles, such as those who work with learners, both within and without the learning and skills sector.

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Definition of different teaching ‘areas’

These might include particular

- teaching contexts eg colleges, community capacity building projects, prison education etc
- types of learners eg 14-16 in colleges or the workplace, learners with challenging behaviours
- education systems eg post compulsory provision and qualification arrangements in Scotland

FENTO proposes the following key characteristics:

- a number of routes to achievement of the licence
- minimum and maximum time boundaries for completion of the required elements within the licence and the licence itself
- proportionality of the components to each other
- a tariff for component parts
- entitlement to look outside the employing organisation for options to complete components, and
- a flexible methodology for the compilation and presentation of evidence

These characteristics would apply equally to the qualification phase and to workplace development. Time boundaries should be determined by accumulation of the number of hours taught, not the duration of employment. This is based on the notion that the trainee teachers/early career teachers need to carry out a minimum ‘volume’ of teaching activity in order to demonstrate satisfactorily those traits described in paragraph 3.4 of the DfES consultation document. It will therefore take part time teachers a longer period of employment to gain the same experience of teaching.

### 3 An exploration of the characteristics with sample factors for debate

routes	<p><i>i) All varieties of the routes should be available in all modes to include pre service and in service, both part time and full time. There should be opportunities for flexible/distance elements. Routes to be via national awarding body programmes; higher education institution programmes, or a mixture of both</i></p> <p><i>ii) Instead of stages there could be mini awards within a single overall qualification</i></p> <p><i>iii) Provide “access to teaching” at level 3 – and lateral progression opportunities from ‘para’ teaching roles such as learning support and instructing</i></p> <p><i>iv) Provide a single Professional Certificate for Teaching in the Learning and Skills Sector – but establish differentiated level outcomes to this (having set statutory minimum) – and core and cluster options</i></p> <p><i>v) Ensure local access to appropriate starting point for everyone – minimum level available in all regions (or possibly sub regional areas)</i></p>
boundaries	<p><i>i) Maximum 5 years’ currency for components when applying for licence completion (ie no component to be no older than 5 years at the date of licence application)</i></p> <p><i>ii) Minimum period for work based phase to be 3 months post completion of certification <b>and</b> accumulation of additional 120 hours teaching. For those with pre service qualifications this might be set for</i></p>

*longer eg one year to give more exposure to the workplace before a licence is granted*

*iii) Clear guidance to be set for the earliest date teachers can apply for a licence*

*proportionality i) The balance of demands between the two phases, ie the balance of present teaching commitment/role/teaching practice placement to a licence which is genuinely 'across sector'. How much variety of practice is essential/desirable? Should this variety be a requirement only for new entrants, or should this process extend into a CPD framework?*

*ii) Achievability, eg part time teacher with 4 hours endorsable teaching per week could complete qualification and workplace development components in 4 academic years (4 hours x 30 weeks x 4 years; part time teacher with 10 hours of endorsable teaching per week in 2 academic years and 1 term (12 weeks/minimum 3 months' time rule) (assumes a 2 year part time qualification programme in each instance)*

*tariff i) Means of ensuring comparability of components across sector, especially where individual licence applicant may assemble these from different providers. Might include a combination of elements including transferable credit – this would need referencing to the Framework for Achievement developments which gives scope for recognition of provision outside the National Qualification Framework activity*

*entitlement i) National/regional register of mentors by specialism*  
*ii) Entitlement to undertake teaching practice on qualification phase outside employing organisation if employer cannot meet provider requirements (requirements could include a 'satisfactory' or above grade for curriculum area – or other form of confirming standard and certain minimum levels of support)*

*iii) National/regional register of external assessors – for independent workplace observation and to sign off Professional Development log locally*

*evidence i) A career development portfolio, which takes the form of a recording process for registering and reviewing continuing professional development, would seem to be the best method of capturing the ongoing learning which must be evidenced in the workplace development phase. An agreed and standardised methodology could be used to record experience, reflection on practice, and action planning, in relation to coverage of the standards for teaching and supporting learning*

*ii) A career-long CPD log could be introduced at the beginning of a contract of teaching employment, or on enrolment on a suitable ITT programme. The process could be sub-divided into key components or sections, which reflect separate stages of career progression.*

*Thus, the collation of required evidence at any particular career development point can be built into the documentation process; with appropriate referencing of achievement evidence and 'signing off' by observers and mentors. Such a tool could be used in any learning environment and would also allow the necessary flexibility for those engaged in portfolio careers*

*iii) CPD activities could include those 'rated' through the tariff not only from across the learning and skills sector, but also relevant opportunities from CPD frameworks in other sectors*

*A 'tariff and log' system also has the merit of features which would allow existing teachers to record and rate their CPD in such a way that could also provide access to licensed status. Such pathways would need further exploration once the requirements for new entrants have been agreed and established.*

#### **4 Provider requirements**

To ensure that the licence to practise in the learning and skills sector has parity of esteem with school teaching, FENTO believes that we need to borrow from QTS not only the trainee teacher entitlement with appropriate components, but also – and crucially – to place stringent requirements on both the providers of components, and those authorised to sign off licences.

**Any organisation involved in ITT or licence to practise arrangements should be required to:**

- Agree to provide the full trainee teacher entitlement for any trainee teachers on their staff
- Provide external evidence of satisfactory, or more than satisfactory leadership and management, together with support for the development of the workforce
- Ensure all staff involved in any aspect of professional formation (eg recruitment and initial assessment; course delivery; observation assessment; subject or generic mentoring; moderation, verification and external examining, etc) are trained and supported in their role(s), which are stated in their job descriptions
- Only accept trainee teachers for purposes of completing components into curriculum areas/occupational specialities graded 'satisfactory' as minimum (or comparable evidence if outside the Common Inspection Framework, eg HM Inspectorate of Police, Social Services Inspectorate, etc)
- Abide by a code of practice to ensure trainee teachers are matched to components which give them the most appropriate experiences, whether or not these are in-house or external



- Operate robust, fair and transparent processes, procedures and appeals policies. They should apply both on arrangements between component providers and trainee teachers, and between organisations in any consortium, co-operative, franchise or other arrangement to provide components of a licence verification service
- Demonstrate commitment to quality improvement and have in place strategies to achieve this
- Maintain accurate and current registers of accredited mentors and assessors (and abide by data protection legislation)

It is possible that there may be organisations involved in either ITT or licence to practise arrangements, but not necessarily directly in both. In such cases an organisation would itself need to meet the requirements for the activities it directly provides, and should then ensure that any institutions (engaged in ITT or licence to practise arrangements) with whom the organisation contracts also meet all appropriate requirements.

## **5 The infrastructure necessary to operate a licence to practise system**

If every new entrant to the profession is to start at a point which matches their needs then the landscape of initial teacher training will have to change. To ensure the best possible fit between the resources available and the provision of opportunities for full professional development, the following factors will need to be taken into account:

- Access to scholarship skills
- Accreditation of previous relevant skills, experience and attainment
- Assessment of teaching competence in workplace development phase as well as in qualification
- Choice of pathways to licence
- Components provided at the degree of difficulty which allows potential to be achieved
- Geographical and mode accessibility to required components
- Preparation for a reasonable range of work opportunities across the sector
- Support for application of subject/occupational specialism(s) to teaching role through mentoring or other means

In order to maximise the resources for teacher training, it is essential to limit inefficiencies such as:

- a quality placement in location A may lack a trainee teacher because the provider partner to that institution has not recruited anyone with that specialism
- a teacher from a less commonly offered subject cannot find a mentor in his/her workplace since no one else has been appointed to teach the same specialism<sup>2</sup>, or that

<sup>2</sup> Specialism refers to both occupational expertise and/or subject specialism(s).



- those looking for best practice as an active strategy in a post-inspection plan cannot trawl as widely as possible for suitable experiences which show the way forward

Nor can a licence to practise for the learning and skills sector be meaningful when teaching has been limited to 120 hours with the same group of learners in the same narrow curriculum and in a single institution.

Initial teacher training in England already includes examples of collaborative arrangements between organisations from different parts of the education system. This concept of pooling resources – staffing and learning materials, quality assurance processes, course development, if not funding – could be extended to ensure adequate provision of:

- quality assured teaching practice – placement or employment
- trained and accredited mentors – generic and subject specialist
- trained and accredited assessors of teaching practice
- reciprocal teaching opportunities in different ‘areas’ of the sector
- an infrastructure capable of making the best matches between trainee teachers’ needs and opportunities to gain components of the licence
- role models and exemplars of good practice including observation of peers and mentors

Such arrangements would also be a means of including in the initial teacher training system those parts of the sector which need fully qualified teachers, but do not possess the internal infrastructure to support or deliver much, or any, of the trainee teacher entitlement directly.

Moreover, such collaborative arrangements have an infrastructure which could in time be developed to provide a licence verification service leading to the recommendation for conferment of the award. There are also potential contributors who have not to date been involved in these types of arrangements, who could add much to the potential scope and variety of these outcomes, locally, regionally and nationally.

## **6 Implications for stakeholders**

Administrations of the 4 countries of the UK

- Fulfil statutory role in appointing and commissioning licensing bodies
- Agree a common definition of what is required to become a licensed teacher in the learning and skills sector
- Amend regulations
- Construct matrix to allow comparability across administrations and regulations

SSC

- May be commissioned and could commission standards for ITT and early career teachers
- Offer flexible sector level planning arrangements to determine number of licence verification bodies required and equity of access to components of licence

- Capacity build to develop a pool of future teacher educators, generic and subject specialist mentors, trained observation assessors

#### Endorsing body

- Consider the requirements that apply to the workplace development phase as well as the qualification
- Carry out the audit of licence verification bodies on behalf of SSC

#### Inspection bodies

- Should have an amended remit to inspect all components to the licence

#### Funding bodies

- Secure adequate funding for the entitlement and provider requirements
- Track funding of entitlement and provider requirements

#### Current or new ITT providers

- Consider what contribution could be made individually and/or collaboratively to providing licence to practise components locally, regionally, nationally
- Create an effective matching system that operated in the trainee teacher's best interests for the components offered
- Consider whether to apply to be a licence verification body

#### Licensing body and licence verification consortia

- Ensure that open, transparent, fair and reliable procedures for verifying licence components have been met, for awarding licences and maintaining a register of licence holders

#### Trainee teachers

- Take responsibility for completing components and applying for award of licence
- Consider how to meet the costs of licence application

**FENTO**  
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## *Notes*

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